



# Amesbury

Open Space, Natural Resources, and Trails Committee  
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## **Achieving Amesbury's Open Space Goals: A Resource for Project Review & Decision Making**

### Let the OSC help

As an advisory committee to Municipal Boards, the Mayor, City Council and the general public, the OSC is a resource for you. Upon request the OSC can provide recommendations to aid in your decision making or project planning. In addition, the following Open Space Assessment Tool/checklist can be used as a first step in assessing how well your project or decision addresses Amesbury's open space goals.

### Open Space Assessment Tool

Does your project/decision consider opportunities for advancing Amesbury's open space goals? How well does it advance those goals? Are there opportunities to achieve even better results? In addition to obtaining recommendations from the OSC, use the following checklist as an easy reference tool to aid in project evaluation and decision making.

### **Assessment questions that address the broad scope and goals of the Amesbury Open Space Plan**

- Does the project/decision advance, upgrade or improve elements of one or more of these 7 actions steps identified in the Open Space & Recreation Plan? What opportunities are there?
  - ☐ Enhance Woodsom Farm for conservation & recreational needs;
  - ☐ Provide public access to lakes, ponds & rivers;
  - ☐ Develop the Riverwalk & bikeway between downtown & Route 110 connection with the Salisbury Rail Trail;
  - ☐ Promote conservation acquisition & restrictions on critical open spaces or create a formal policy for acquisition of open space;
  - ☐ Develops additional play fields and/or updates existing playgrounds;
  - ☐ Protects, restores, or establishes urban street trees;
  - ☐ Assists in development of permanent site for Carriage Museum/Visitors Center;
- Does the project/decision advance, upgrade, or improve one or more of the 5 goals identified in the Open Space & Recreation Plan? What opportunities are there?
  - ☐ Preserve land for conservation, recreational opportunities, agriculture, and wetland protection;
  - ☐ Provides protection, preservation and enhancement of water resources (drinking water supply & quality, rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands, etc.);
  - ☐ Preserve the historic, scenic, cultural and architectural character of Amesbury;
  - ☐ Better utilize and expand uses of existing open spaces and facilities through trail systems within the community;
  - ☐ Provide both passive and active recreational opportunities for all residents of Amesbury (including pathways/trails, managing Amesbury's natural resources for tourism and cultural economic development, creation of additional parks & multi-purpose recreational fields)

- Does the project/decision advance or is it consistent with the community vision identified in the Open Space Plan? What opportunities are there?

☐ *“Our vision is to preserve the classic New England Village character and heritage that currently exists in Amesbury, while accommodating growth in a manner that is well controlled, respectful of our open space and natural resources, and appropriate to meet the present and future needs of the community.”*

### **Assessment questions that more specifically address the scope and goals of the Amesbury Open Space Plan**

#### **Protecting High Priority Open Space**

- ☐ Does the project maintain, enhance or add to the City’s Green Infrastructure? *Green infrastructure* is the patchwork of natural areas that provides assorted benefits to Amesbury such as flood protection, clean air, clean water, recreational opportunities and their associated health benefits, educational opportunities, passive transportation corridors (such as hiking or biking trails), economic benefits such as tourism, etc.
- ☐ Is the project located within a priority area for conservation such as the Conservation Plan for the Merrimack River Watershed, the Natural Heritage BioMap2, Amesbury Open Space plan or similar plans?
- ☐ Does the project site have significant natural communities/habitats, natural landmarks, or is it important to endangered, threatened, or rare species or those listed as species of special concern?
- ☐ Does the project site (or a portion of it) serve as an important link between other open spaces?
- ☐ Is the landowner willing to donate the land (or a portion of it) as open space to the City or a non-profit?
- ☐ Is the landowner willing to donate a conservation restriction on the land (or a portion of it)?
- ☐ Can a right of first refusal to acquire the property/project site be obtained?

#### **Trails & Public Access**

- ☐ Are there indications the project site is being used by the public?
- ☐ Are there any methods to maintain those uses after the proposed project is approved?
- ☐ Does the project create, connect, improve, or maintain trails or public access points? Is there potential?
- ☐ Is the landowner willing to provide a trail easement or access easement?
- ☐ Does the community have long-term plans for recreational use of the property/project site?

#### **Management of City Lands**

- ☐ Is there a management plan for the property? If not, when/how can one be developed?
- ☐ Are there restrictions on the property such as deed restrictions or other restrictions that might guide the type of management required to adhere to those restrictions? What are the specific restrictions?
- ☐ When the land was acquired, what was the intended use? How might that inform the management of it?
- ☐ What are the various uses of the property now? Are multi-uses possible and/or appropriate?
- ☐ Are there local or regionally special resources that could be impacted or improved by management activities?
- ☐ Are there management prescriptions that can benefit the property while generating revenue or reducing expenses to the City? What opportunities are there?
- ☐ Does the management/decision balance protection of open space and natural resources with other goals? What opportunities are there?

#### **Natural & Cultural Resources**

- ☐ Are variances, waivers, or special permits being requested that would impact important natural, cultural and/or open space resources? Are those requests necessary or warranted? What alternatives are there?
- ☐ Does the project/action/decision protect critical wildlife species and habitats documented and mapped by the MA division of Fisheries and Wildlife? What opportunities or alternatives are there?
- ☐ Is the property identified as important farmland? What can be done to preserve it?
- ☐ What surface water bodies will be affected by the project? What can be done to protect them?
- ☐ Will there be removal of natural vegetation, such as in a woodland or along a stream, river, or wetland? Can that be avoided? Will there be a loss of natural cover types such as meadows, grasslands or forest? How can they be protected? What alternatives are there?
- ☐ Are views being maintained and/or protected? What opportunities or alternatives are there?
- ☐ Will the project/decision will result in fragmentation of large, intact habitats/open space? How can that be avoided or minimized?